

Remarks

Claims 1, 7, 14, and 20 have been amended. Claim 11 was previously canceled. Claims 1-10 and 12-21 are now in the case.

I. Rejections under 35 U.S.C. 103

Claims 1-3, 5-9, 14-16, 20, and 21 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103 based on Schaub in view of Bolling. Claims 4 and 17-19 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103 based on Schaub and Bolling and further in view of Halligan. Claim 10 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103 based on Schaub and Bolling in further in view of Cheng.

The applicant respectfully disagrees with the examiner's rejections. However, various claims have been amended to more particularly define the present invention, in one or more embodiments.

Claim 1 has been amended and now specifies:

1. An apparatus comprising:
 - a first knife;
 - a second knife;
 - wherein the first knife includes a first attachment device;
 - wherein the second knife includes a second attachment device;
 - wherein the first attachment device and the second attachment device can be attached to each other to attach the first knife to the second knife;
 - wherein the first attachment device and the second attachment device can be detached from each other to detach the first knife from the second knife;
 - wherein the first attachment device is comprised of a first plate having an opening;
 - wherein the second attachment device is comprised of a protrusion;
 - wherein the protrusion of the second attachment device can be inserted into the opening of the first plate to attach the first knife to the second knife;
 - wherein the second attachment device is comprised of a second plate attached to the protrusion; and
 - wherein the first attachment device is comprised of a third plate having an opening which is substantially aligned with the opening of the first plate, and wherein the protrusion can be inserted into the opening of the third plate to attach the first knife to the second knife; and
 - wherein the protrusion can only be inserted into the openings of the first plate and the third plate when the second plate is at an angle with respect to the first plate and the

third plate;

and wherein after the protrusion has been inserted into the openings of the first plate and the third plate, and while the protrusion resides in the openings of the first plate and the third plate, the second plate can be put into alignment with respect to the first plate and the third plate by rotating the second plate with respect to the first and the third plates until the second plate becomes aligned with respect to the first and the third plates.

In the present application, in one or more embodiments, a protrusion 126 (Present application, Fig. 5A) can only be inserted into opening 26 of plate 11 (Id., Fig. 1A) and opening 92h of plate 92 (Id. at Fig. 13A) when plate 111 (Id. at Fig. 15A and 15B) is at an angle with respect to the plate 11 and plate 92. (Present application, pg. 13, second paragraph, Fig. 9A). After the protrusion 126 has been inserted, and while the protrusion 126 resides in the openings 26 and 92h, the plate 111 can be put into alignment with respect to the plates 11 and 92 by rotating the plate 111 with respect to the plates 11 and 92 until the plate 111 becomes aligned. (Id.)

Schaub does not show the combination of limitations of claim 1. Bolling discloses two slots 7 in knife handle 3, two tongues 38 in spoon handle 2, and two tongues 39 in fork handle 4. (Bolling; Fig. 2, 3, and 4) In order to connect the spoon handle 2 to the knife handle 3, the spoon handle 2 must be aligned with respect to the knife handle 3, so that the two tongues 38 can be inserted into the two slots 7. (Id.) Similarly, in order to connect the fork handle 4 to the knife handle 3, the fork handle 4 must be aligned with respect to the knife handle so that the two tongues 39 can be inserted into the two slots 7. (Id.)

The combination of Schaub, Bolling, Halligan, and Cheng does not show the combination of limitations of claim 1.

The present invention, in one or more embodiments, eliminates the need for two slots or two tongues as shown shown in Bolling, resulting in reduced manufacturing cost. The present invention, in one or more embodiments, provides for insertion when plates are at an angle and

rotating to cause alignment.

Claim 1 is submitted to be allowable for at least the above reasons. Claims 2-6 and 8-10 are dependent on claim 1 and are submitted to be allowable for at least the same reasons as claim 1.

Claim 7 has been amended and now specifies:

7. An apparatus comprising:
- a first knife;
 - a second knife;
 - wherein the first knife includes a first attachment device;
 - wherein the second knife includes a second attachment device;
 - wherein the first attachment device and the second attachment device can be attached to each other to attach the first knife to the second knife;
 - wherein the first attachment device and the second attachment device can be detached from each other to detach the first knife from the second knife;
 - wherein the first attachment device is comprised of a first plate having an opening;
 - wherein the second attachment device is comprised of a protrusion attached to a second plate;
 - wherein the protrusion of the second attachment device can be inserted into the opening of the first plate to attach the first knife to the second knife;
 - wherein the opening in the first plate of the first attachment device has a first substantially rectangular portion, a substantially circular portion, and a second substantially rectangular portion;
 - wherein the protrusion can only be inserted into the opening of the first plate when the second plate is at an angle with respect to the first plate.
 - and wherein after the protrusion has been inserted into the opening of the first plate, and while the protrusion resides in the opening of the first plate, the second plate can be put into alignment with respect to the first plate by rotating the second plate with respect to the first plate until the second plate becomes aligned with respect to the first plate.

The combination of Schaub, Bolling, Halligan, and Cheng does not show the combination of limitations of claim 7. Claim 7 is submitted to be allowable.

Claim 14 has been amended and now specifies:

14. A method comprising the steps of:
- attaching a first attachment device of a first knife to a second attachment device of a second knife, in order to attach the first knife and the second knife together; and
 - detaching the first attachment device of the first knife from the second attachment device of the second knife in order to detach the first knife from the second knife;
 - wherein the first attachment device is comprised of a first plate having an opening;
 - wherein the second attachment device is comprised of a protrusion;

and further comprising inserting the protrusion of the second attachment device into the opening of the first plate to attach the first knife to the second knife.

wherein the second attachment device is comprised of a second plate attached to the protrusion;

wherein the first attachment device is comprised of a third plate having an opening, which is substantially aligned with the opening of the first plate, and further comprising

inserting the protrusion into the opening of the third plate to attach the first knife to the second knife; and

wherein the protrusion can only be inserted into the openings of the first plate and the third plate when the second plate is at an angle with respect to the first plate and the third plate;

and wherein after the protrusion has been inserted into the openings of the first plate and the third plate, and while the protrusion resides in the openings of the first plate and the third plate, the second plate can be put into alignment with respect to the first plate and the third plate by rotating the second plate with respect to the first and the third plates until the second plate becomes aligned with respect to the first and the third plates.

The combination of Schaub, Bolling, Halligan, and Cheng does not show the limitations of claim 14. Claim 14 is submitted to be allowable. Claims 15-19 and 21 are dependent on claim 14 and are also submitted to be allowable for at least the same reasons.

Claim 20 has been amended and now specifies:

20. (currently amended) A method comprising the steps of:

attaching a first attachment device of a first knife to a second attachment device of a second knife, in order to attach the first knife and the second knife together; and

detaching the first attachment device of the first knife from the second attachment device of the second knife in order to detach the first knife from the second knife;

wherein the first attachment device is comprised of a first plate having an opening;

wherein the second attachment device is comprised of a protrusion attached to a second plate;

and further comprising inserting the protrusion of the second attachment device into the opening of the first plate to attach the first knife to the second knife; and

configuring the opening in the first plate of the first attachment device to have a first substantially rectangular portion, a substantially circular portion, and a second substantially rectangular portion; and

wherein the protrusion can only be inserted into the opening of the first plate when the second plate is at an angle with respect to the first plate;

and wherein after the protrusion has been inserted into the opening of the first plate, and while the protrusion resides in the opening of the first plate, the second plate can be put into alignment with respect to the first plate by rotating the second plate with respect to the first plate until the second plate becomes aligned with respect to the first plate.

The combination of Schaub, Bolling, Halligan, and Cheng does not show the combination

of limitations of claim 20. Claim 20 is submitted to be allowable.

II. Claims 12-13

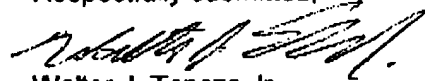
Claims 12-13 have been allowed.

III. Conclusion

Claims 1-10 and 12-21 are respectfully submitted to be in a condition for allowance.

Favorable reconsideration of this application, as amended, is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,



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